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Special Correspondence of THE HERALD.]

Upon receiving your kind note which said that if as gunner, as piscatorial artist, dispatcher of saurians, etc., I had run any hair-breadth escapes or experienced any situations particularly thrilling, I might talk about it through your columns, I began to cudgel my wits in order to arouse the latent energy of my "gray matter." After feasting a day or so on oysters, clams, shrimp, crabs, fish and other materials rich in brain substance I was led to exclaim Eureka! It occurred to me to write in a brief, desultory way of the Florida East Coast, and to give a history and a description of the oldest building in Uncle Sam's domain.

This ancient pile, surrounded by colossal, wide-spreading live oaks from whose giant limbs great clusters of pretty gray Spanish moss hang in festoons, waving gracefully as the trade winds from old ocean sweep through the boughs, the limbs decorated also with hundreds of huge air plants, and a dozen interesting, pretty specimens of cryptogams; by dozens of symmetrical palmetto trees, many of which have attained sufficient age to drop their boots; by veteran cedars and pines, by stately magnolias with their great white petals and dainty fragrance, wild oranges with golden fruit hanging in clusters against the grim walls, and with yellow Jasmine passion flowers, and masses of vines trailing over the windows and through the doors. I say such surroundings combine to render the scene as striking in physical aspects as in historical interest.

Indulge me, Mr. HERALD, in a few introductory observations, of a desultory character, relative to the east coast of Florida before I attempt a description of the old monastery or mansion, as this section till recently has been a sort of TERRA INCOGNITA in the map of travel.

Florida, which received explorers' earliest attention is one of the last states to be settled up. While the east coast possesses an "individuality" of which east coasters speak with pride, it is not strikingly different from the gulf coast all

the way around to the Rio Grande, nor very different from much of the coast of the great lakes.

Beginning at the mouth of the celebrated St. Johns, which is little south of the Georgia state line, we find bodies of water with two or three exceptions, salt, communicating by some inlet with the ocean, of from a few hundred yards to several miles in width, usually shallow, ordinarily currentless, and abounding, in a full meaning of the term, in fish, oysters, clams, crab, shrimp, lobsters, alligators, turtles, snakes, ducks, geese, snipe, herons, cranes, pelicans, marsh hens, water turkeys and scores of other animated things of the fur, feather and scale kingdoms.

It is a sportsman's paradise and the bang of guns and the whir of reels are heard on all sides. As much real enthusiasm in piscatorial exploits as I have seen this year was displayed in the vicinity of the inlet by a good lady of Nashville, Tenn. It was an ordinary occurrence after her morning's angling to see an able-bodied man go to tote her string in. They would consist of channel bass, red snappers, black snappers, sheepshead, grampus, whiting, trout, sailors' choice, tarpon, porgies, pig fish, weak fish, crevelli, flounders, grupers, Jew fish, black fish, balloon fish, toad fish, cat fish, sharks, sting rays, porcupine fish, lady fish, pilot fish, saw fish, etc.

These bodies of water as a rule are in reality lagoons or sounds, though they are known here commonly as creeks or rivers. They extend south along the coast for about 300 miles in this order: Pablo creek, Matanzas river, Mata Com pra creek, Halifax river, Hillsboro river, Mosquito lagoon, Indian river, Lake Worth, Bayo Ratones, New river, Dumbfoundling bay, Biscayne bay, and Cards sound. These bodies, particularly the Indian river which is 150 miles long, straight as an arrow and from one to seven miles wide, afford as fine water for sail boats and launches as the world offers, so travelers tell me.

Ten years ago this section was hardly known. There were no steamers or naphtha or electric launches, and sail boats even were a luxury; the waters swarmed with myriads of fish, were covered with ducks and geese; wild turkeys, deer and bear were to be had without an effort; the straggling settlers lived in isolation and made long journeys for mail and for articles of clothing and household use. Henry M. Flagler, one of the standard oil magnates appeared upon the scene and waived over it the magic wand. He first lifted St. Augustine up out of the mire. His Ponce de Leon, Alcazar and Cordova rank among the princely hostel-

ries of the world; then he began to blaze the way through forests, hammocks, over streams, swamps and lakes with his lines of railway and recently he has capped the climax by throwing a line almost the full length of the east coast, parallel with these beautiful stretches of water, and is about to complete dredging artificial canals, which gives a continuous navigable water route almost the full length of the east coast. As a result emigrants are pouring in by the hundreds, the shipments of winter grown vegetables and of pine apples are being doubled, if not trebled, every season, while oranges and other fruits are receiving due attention.

The tourist tide as well as that of emigration has turned this way and the steamboats and cars are taxed to their utmost to accommodate the masses. Hotel Royal Poinciana, capable of entertaining 500 guests, was completed and thrown open for guests in February and before the season closed, less than three months, more than 15,000 names were registered! This is only one instance of scores of such enterprises. The foundation for the first house in the "White City" on Indian river was laid less than two months ago and now they have a population of nearly 2,000 people, all whites, no negroes being permitted to come there. This growth is rapid but it has been going on now for some time. There is nothing strange about it—simple as A B C's. We are almost surrounded by water, the warm gulf stream washes our east coast, we can grow fruits and vegetables in midwinter, we are just placed within three days of New York's markets, thousands of aristocrats with plethora purses want these products.

Then think of our incomparable advantages as a health giving clime. The sun laughs out with face of dazzling gold almost every day in the year; constant but mild and bracing breezes fan our faces bronze; there are no freezing winters to chill the blood; the seasons come and go in our soft round of spring. One would judge from the hundreds of invalid tourists here that the injunction, "Honor thy father and thy mother," etc., has been changed to "come to the Florida east coast that thy days may be long," etc. I would not have you believe that our seasons, if they may be called seasons, are always on schedule time and suited to demands; quite the contrary sometimes. Droughts are sometimes followed by repeated, drenching rains, crops of extraordinary value are followed by direct failures and we are thus led to wonder whether Florida is a bountiful, kind parent or a merciless step-mother.

Florida is unquestionably the greatest state for fruit in the union, and yet many of Kentucky's choicest fruits, such as apples, peaches, cherries, plums, etc., grow very indifferently here. I can not recall the names of all our fruits, probably not more than half of them: melons, such as are grown in Kentucky, strawberries, raspberries, dewberries, grapes, numerous varieties; figs, pine apples, some of which attain a weight of fifteen pounds; guavas, sweet and sour of various kinds; grape fruit, bread fruit, oranges (tangarines, mandarins, naval and the ordinary orange of the market), lemons, limes, Japan persimmons, mangos, sugar apples, tamarinds loquats or Japan plums, pomegranats, grown on trees; paw-paws, bananas, cocoanuts, palmetto berries, sapodillas, mamees, avacados, mulberries, Leconte pears and pecan—to peaches. The commonest sort of "cracker" here can spread fruits on his table that would be the envy of the northern millionaire.

As any one with the slightest knowledge of pomology would infer we have a variety of soil. The principal classes enumerated by the land companies are: High hammock, low hammock, half hammock, high pine, low pine, spruce pine, savanna prairie, coquina, phosphate, muck, beach, and hard pan land. They speak also of northern Florida, semi-tropical and sub-tropical Florida, though the latter is a distinction without a difference.

The most celebrated of Florida hammocks is the Turnbull hammock, which has its northern terminus near the headwaters of the Halifax river (tide water flowing in and out at Mosquito inlet)

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and extends south the length of this river, the length of Hillsbro river, Mosquito lagoon and a distance of twelve miles along the Indian river. It was in this hammock, rich in the accumulated vegetable mould of centuries of decay that Turnbull, from whom it took its name, settled his colony a little less than 200 years ago. Prior to his time, however, a colony of forty families from the Bermuda islands settled at the present site of New Smyrna, attracted by the fine live oak forests which abounded. The success of the colony, the salubrity of the climate, its wonderful productivity and its adaptability to the cultivation of indigo which was in great demand attracted the attention of English capitalists to the place. Accordingly Dr. Andrew Turnbull, of London, who was married to a Grecian woman, headed a colony for the purpose of growing indigo and sugar cane. Settlers from Minorca, one of the Balearic isles, and from Greece and Italy to the number of 1,500 came over. They were located at what was then called Mosquito, now New Smyrna, almost opposite our lighthouse, which stands on the north side of Mosquito inlet. They rebuilt and utilized old coquina building, which had been there nobody knew how long. The old mission or monastery, of which I wish particularly to write, was the principal one, and it is now generally known as "Turnbull's Old Sugar Mill." Here the Minorca people built their cabins, planted their vines, their fruits, grew their vegetables, directing a number of hours every day to the cultivation of sugar cane and indigo. The settlement took the name of New Smyrna from Smyrna, the birth place of Mrs. Turnbull. It had been agreed in forming the colony that after three years the settlers were to be freed and to receive fifty acres with such improvements as they might find time to make in the interim. Handsome returns from their labors made Turnbull greedy and his promises failed. He kept them as slaves, treated them tyrannically, worked them on short rations, a part of the time giving them a quart of corn per day and only two ounces of hog meat per week. They submitted for nine years and dwindled in numbers to 600. He had his stocks, his whipping post, and his dungeons under his mansion. The immense ditches they dug for miles to drain the back lands are now discharging the superfluous water as when Turnbull left them. Wells nicely walled and arched are yet in use, while indigo vats and various other evidences of Turnbull's occupation are frequently to be met with.

Finally in their despair an attempt was made to secure their escape to the

Bahama islands. It was termed an insurrection and cost two of the leaders their lives. While the masses were toiling on in slavery with no hope of a bettered condition, three of their number, Pellicier, Llamblas and Genoply escaped to St. Augustine and secured the promise of the governor of this old Spanish city their protection. They returned to New Smyrna and immediately the entire colony of laborers, a wretched handful compared with the number who had come over under such flattering promises, set out en masse up the white beach for St. Augustine, and today the descendants of these people from the Mediterranean isles, form the bulk of ye ancient city's population.

The sugar mills and indigo vats went to waste. Great trailing vines enveloped them and the golden fruit of oranges grown by the Minorcans, dropped into the vats, the open windows and the rusty sugar mill boilers. Coquina walls soon melt away, the summer sun is baking them to dust, the winter rains are washing them to earth, each zephyr steals some grain of loam or silica and drops it neath the tangled mass of tropic growth, and little now remains to mark the site of the once populous and prosperous English colony.

I visited this week the "old rock house" which is opposite our lighthouse and inlet. It antedates Turnbull's time. It is built of coquina, 20x36 feet, and has fire place and chimney. The roof is gone and in the middle, where there were breaks in the concrete floor, stand several ancient cedar trees. This building was evidently made by people of the Catholic faith, as a niche in the wall for the reception of the Virgin Mary shows. It is situated on an immense mound of oyster and clam shells. Among these shells are found pottery, the work of Indians or Mound Builders long, long years before America was ever dreamed of. I climbed upon the vine-covered walls of this building, and what a view! Lovely as a painter's vision! Hollow ground with winding, gurgling, sparkling streams, giant live oaks, decorated with Spanish moss, a grove of wild oranges, loaded with golden fruit, palmettoes and magnolias, a net-work of probably fifty streams of sparkling tide-water leading in serpentine channels through marsh grass, their shores fringed with mangrove bushes to which cling millions of oysters; full view of Ponce Park settlement, giant light house tower, the Halifax and Hillsboro rivers as they unite and flow in and out Mosquito inlet with the tides, the long line of silver spray made by the ocean swells as they break on the white sands of the finest beach I have ever

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